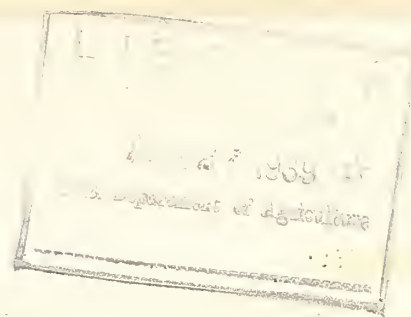


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THE 4-H STEPS OF PROGRESS

Broadcast from New York in the National 4-H Radio Program, Saturday, February 4, 1939, by Charles Vaughn, Davisville, R. I.; Madeline Mills, Johnston, R. I., and L. F. Kinney, Jr., State Club Leader, over 99 stations associated with the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company.

ANNOUNCER: (NEW YORK)

Here in the NBC studios in Radio City are two 4-H Club members from the smallest State in the Union -- Rhode Island -- and L. J. Kinney, Jr., the Rhode Island State Club Leader. They are going to tell you about the 4-H Steps of Progress.

All right, Mr. Kinney, let's have the story.

KINNEY:

As Mr. _____ has said, we're from the smallest state, but let me introduce these two Rhode Island 4-H Club members to show that we can make good records just the same. Here is Madeline Mills of Johnston. Madeline has been in 4-H Club work for eight years. That's right isn't it, Madeline?

MILLS:

Yes, Mr. Kinney, I've been eight years in the clothing, foods, and room furnishing work, but I've done most in clothing.

KINNEY:

You took first place in the state 4-H style revue contest, and then?

MILLS:

I was awarded a blue ribbon in the National 4-H Style Revue contest at Chicago. That was the best of all. I wanted to make a good record for Rhode Island.

KINNEY:

You surely did, Madeline, and they all said you looked as pretty as a queen. And now here is a Rhode Island 4-H Club boy, Charles Vaughn, of Davisville. What have you been interested in, Charles?

VAUGHN:

Handicraft, Mr. Kinney. I tried poultry and gardening, but I liked the woodworking best. I've carried the handicraft project for nine years.

KINNEY:

That's long enough to gain a lot of experience, Charles. You have been climbing the 4-H Steps, too. First place in the county and state contests this year. What else?

VAUGHN:

I placed second in the United States in the National 4-H Handicraft contest.

KINNEY:

That was a splendid honor to bring to the smallest state. And the award?

VAUGHN:

A two hundred dollar scholarship. That will make one of my dreams come true. I am going to take courses at the Rhode Island School of Design.

KINNEY:

That's great, Charles. You and Madeline have done some splendid work to make these records.

Madeline, how many articles did you make in the clothing work last year?

MILLS:

Four hundred and fifty-six, to be exact.

KINNEY:

How many of these were dresses?

MILLS:

About two hundred.

KINNEY:

No wonder you were dressed like a queen with all that wardrobe to select from.

MILLS:

Oh, they weren't all for me. The neighbors liked my sewing and I have been using all my spare time doing extra work for them.

KINNEY:

Have you found it profitable?

MILLS:

Yes, I have -- in two ways. By making my own clothes I have saved a great deal. Then I've had a good cash income from sewing for others.

KINNEY:

How about you, Charles. Has the 4-H work put you into business, too?

VAUGHN:

Yes, I have my own woodworking shop now. All last year I had more orders ahead for new articles and for repairing furniture, and for other work, than I could keep up with.

KINNEY:

I've seen some of your work and I can well understand why people come to you for original designs. You think 4-H training helped you to get started in this work?

VAUGHN:

It gave me the encouragement I needed to keep trying to do my work better and it helped me find what I could do best.

KINNEY:

Of course it is apparent that both you and Madeline had a natural interest and capability in these projects in which you have been so successful. But what is there in the 4-H program that made you keep so persistently trying to excel?

MILLS:

I guess it was the same thing that makes all 4-H members want to work for honors, Mr. Kinney. We started down at the bottom of the 4-H Steps, and we wanted to get to the top. It didn't take me long to find out that the honor steps get you ahead faster than the regular steps. I think the 4-H Steps of Progress plan helps a great deal. Didn't you feel an urge to climb the 4-H Steps as fast and as high as possible, Charles?

VAUGHN:

Yes, I began to think of the 4-H Steps like a ladder with rungs that led to the things I wanted most. I found, too, that I couldn't get to the top just by doing the minimum amount for completion each year. It takes honor records to get to the highest steps.

KINNEY:

These 4-H Steps that you are referring to are a little different in different states. Perhaps you ought to explain a bit about the Rhode Island 4-H Steps of Progress.

MILLS:

Why, the 4-H Steps are just a name for the series of age groups or honor groups that we keep advancing into as we get older.

There are new badges or steps every two years for those who complete their projects, and a special series of honor steps for those who make outstanding records. These steps lead to the highest step of all which is the 4-H All Stars. I think it's that top step that puts the pep into the whole 4-H program.

VAUGHN:

I do, too, Mr. Kinney. It seems to me that the 4-H All Stars do more than anything else to encourage members to do their best in the 4-H work.

KINNEY:

Naturally, I'm glad to hear you say that, Madeline. But tell us why you feel that way.

MILLS:

As soon as I began to get well acquainted with other 4-H members, I found that the older members I liked best and admired most were All Stars. I didn't think much about it at first, but when I attended State Camp and saw the impressive Consecration Service and watched the new All Star members picked out of the crowd, I felt that I wanted to be one of that group some day.

KINNEY:

Did you realize then that that top step was a long way off?

MILLS:

It didn't take long for me to find that you have to be at least sixteen years old to be an All Star; and that you must have at least three years of special honor records before you can even be considered for this honor. I was only eleven then, but as soon as I got back from camp I began trying to make a better record.

KINNEY:

And did you do it?

MILLS:

Yes, I did, Mr. Kinney, and that honor ribbon that I received for my clothing record gave me one of my first big thrills in the 4-H work. It made me want to go right on trying for more honors. But I soon found that it took more than just doing good clothing work to attain the special honors, especially as I reached the higher steps. All four of the H's were counted. That is, we also had to have a good health record, and good records of helpfulness in club affairs in order to be considered for special honors.

KINNEY:

Did you ever have any difficulties in meeting these tests?

MILLS:

Oh, yes, Mr. Kinney, especially when I got older. You see, I was so interested in my own sewing work when I found that I could make pretty dresses that I wanted to use every spare minute in sewing for myself. It was hard at first to take time to work with the other girls, and sometimes I'm afraid I wasn't sympathetic enough when the younger girls couldn't do as well as I wanted them to. But some of the 4-H All Stars and my leader, Mrs. Clemence, tried to make me realize that other people had helped me make good records and that it was my turn to pass on the new ideas to others.

KINNEY:

That wasn't hard to do, was it?

MILLS:

Well, frankly, it was -- for a while. But it wasn't long before I began to like it. I became a junior leader about then and it was just as the older leaders had said, -- It was more fun working with the group than working alone - and I learned a lot, too. When these girls began to exhibit and get honors I found myself just as excited as they were. The best award of all came last September when they took first place in competition with all of the other clothing clubs at the state contests.

KINNEY:

So you think now that the honors requirement that a member has to help others in the club, or in some way show growth in the HeartH side, isn't so bad after all?

MILLS:

I had a real chance to find that out, Mr. Kinney, and I know it was worth while for me. After several years, it led to one of the big thrills of my life.

KINNEY:

Tell us about it.

MILLS:

At the Consecration Service at State 4-H Camp one of the members came over and picked me out to come into the All Star circle. I was so happy that I hardly knew whether to laugh or cry. All my hopes had come true. I realized even in all the excitement of those minutes that this was not an honor just in recognition of records that had been made, but that this was offering me an opportunity for greater achievement and greater service than ever before.

Wasn't that the way it seemed to you when you were taken into the All Stars, Charles?

VAUGHN:

About like that, Madeline. I certainly found that being an All Star encouraged me to do more as a junior leader and to keep on improving my project work. The statewide All Star gatherings have kept me in touch with other young people who were making good records, and I've been to every meeting that I could. I think the early October week-end conference on Mount Monadnock is one of the most inspiring times we have. Those hikes up the mountain, the Campfire on the mountain side, and the Sunday morning service at Pulpit Rock, all take us away from the every day things of life. It makes even us boys want to find some way to be of service besides just earning our living. It -- it -- well, it just gets you.

KINNEY:

Let me ask you this, Charles. Do you think this inspiration that you gained from being a member of the All Star group really led to any tangible results?

VAUGHN:

It did with me. I felt that I had a standard of Service to live up to. That was one of the reasons I organized a younger club that we call the Woodcarvers. This club also won blue ribbon honors in the state contests this year.

KINNEY:

Both of you have made splendid records in leadership. Now, as leaders, do you think your members get the same urge to do better work as you did from these 4-H Steps of Progress? How about that, Madeline?

MILLS:

More so, if anything. It seems as if there are always more new things that you want to do when you reach the next step ahead -- and that keeps up the enthusiasm. The younger members want to get into the older member conferences, and those who have received the regular completion badges want to have the honor badges next time. Those who have honors want to reach the special honors grade, and, of course, the special honors members want to be All Stars. Yes, I know my members have caught the spirit of climbing the 4-H Steps and are doing better work so they can climb higher.

KIRNEY:

You both keep referring to this desire for the honors awards. Is it mainly the desire to be an All Star that makes the members want to make the honors records?

VAUGHN:

I think it is partly that, but for the younger members it is largely because of the extra things the honor members can do that other members are not invited to take part in.

MILLS:

That is the way it is in our county, too. We have a big countywide honors banquet every fall. Only the honor members can attend. And several times during the year there are other opportunities for the honor members to get together, or to take responsible parts in arranging for sectional or county gatherings. It seems as if there is always something special for the honor members to do.

KINNEY:

I guess you are right, Madeline. And it's because the honor members and the 4-H All Stars, like you and Charles here, are so enthusiastic about these extra good times and extra opportunities for service that the other members catch the spirit and soon they too are following the honor steps which lead towards the 4-H All Stars.

Our listeners in other states must be realizing by this time that all roads in Rhode Island 4-H Club Work lead toward the 4-H All Stars. We think these 4-H Steps with the All Stars at the top have been an important reason for the great improvement in quality and quantity of 4-H work in Rhode Island in recent years. But this is from the state office side. What do you say from the member's viewpoint, Charles?

VAUGHN:

I say that the incentive of working towards the All Star goal makes us put more effort into our work and get better results; -- and then, whether we reach the top step or not, we have the enjoyment of being honor members. We learn more, and we are better satisfied with the results of our project work.

MILLS:

It's the same with me, Mr. Kinney. I think it's great to have one big objective way ahead of us that we can all get enthusiastic about and work towards instead of separate project objectives, and I've certainly enjoyed climbing these 4-H Steps myself.

ANNOUNCER: (NEW YORK)

And so we see from the experiences of these Rhode Island 4-H Club members that the Steps of Progress do serve an important purpose in stimulating rural young people to do their very best with the capabilities and opportunities which they have.

We have heard Madeline Mills of Johnston, and Charles Vaughn of Davisville in conversation with L. F. Kinney, Jr., State Club Leader in Rhode Island.

To continue this 4-H Club Program, we return you now to Washington.

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